Rome Dec^r 1^st 1868

My dear Marie

I regret so much that I have not been able to send you the needful before owing to my very serious illness, which has thrown me back nearly £50 in doctors medicines, baths, carriages, & journeys so that I go to the end of the year penniless my suffering has been indeed great, but fortunately I did not know the fatal nature of the disorder so that I never lost my cheerfulness

In the new year in Jan^y I shall be able to send you more — I hear that my Twins are on their way to me, for the people here have been saying "What strange people must the Consuls children be for here is their Father in a dying state & not one of them with him" — but nothing could surpass the kind devotion I have received, which I think may have saved my life — I hope you

do not suffer from the rheumatism as they
more, tho I fear you will never get rid of
it for it sticks to one like a Creditor – I am
better owing to this illness, but still so
weak that I can but just walk & never
venture alone as yet

But how fortunate I am to be able to
command every attention & comfort for
otherwise I must have died – My Doctor
consoles me that I shall be stronger than
ever – That I have a fine constitution which
will endure – but my strength comes very
slow – There was great concern about me
in Rome on account of the great amount
of good I am able to achieve

Our weather is very wet & dank & very
bad for me but my house is very comfortable
& my two Sec.ys my Cook & man are excellents

Yours loving Joe